

To Live Without You Would Be Torture . .

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Summary: Death is just as lively for the Singer's as their life was.
;)

To Live Without You Would Be Torture . .

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Um.. This is a different story and one that began as a dream that Dani made the mistake of telling me. ;-)) I couldn't get it out of my head and before I knew it I had started this story. And yes it's probably going to spawn a small series. It wouldn't be me if it didn't. LOL

This story isn't really set in a certain point in continuity. I'd place it somewhere in the latter half of the 4th season, for lack of any other time-line reference.

Yes it's a long title, but once you read the story you'll see that the title is extremely fitting. (title inspired by a quote from The Addams Family Movie)

To Live Without You Would Be Torture; To Die Without You Would Be Death

By Michele Savage (Story idea stolen...er...borrowed from Dani Calderwood ;-))

Jeff held the door open for Hilary as she stormed into the station, tucking a loose wet strand of hair back into place under the hat she wore. It stayed in place only seconds before she angrily ripped the soaked hat from her head and threw it on the lobby chair nearest her. She took her gloves off and wrung them out, then sent them flying as well toward the chair.

"I look like a drowned rat! Who ever told that idiot he could drive should be fired!"

"Darling," Jeff argued, as he took his own soaked jacket off, "It wasn't his fault. The other car cut him off."

"Cut him off into the Allegheny!" She retorted. She looked at the watch on Jeff's wrist. It had stopped at seven forty-five. She swiveled around to look at the clock on the wall. It read ten. "Great we're two hours late. Betty is going to have both our hides, which I should hand blame to the Pittsburgh Taxicab company--what?" she asked, finally noticing Jeff tugging at her sleeve.

"It's awfully quiet in here." He observed. "Usually Betty is at the door screaming at us if we're five minutes late."

She glanced around, "Yes, you're right." Gertie's seat was also empty. "Where is everyone?"

They walked down the hallway peeking into doors, No one was in Studio A. That alone was odd. What was on the air? Jeff noticed everyone gathered in the green room and tapped Hilary's shoulder getting her attention.

"I wonder what's going on." He pushed into the room, and started to speak, but saw that everyone was crying or upset. "What's going on?" he asked aloud. Hilary walked in to stand beside him.

The only person who acknowledged his words was Gertie. She looked up, screamed and passed out.

Everyone rushed over to the unconscious woman. Jeff tried to get close to her, but no one seemed to see him. "Scott." He said to the station manager, kneeling next to him. "Scott!" he repeated, pushing against the man's shoulder. Scott reached up and brushed his hand away as if he were an offending bug.

Jeff looked back at Hilary who was trying to get Maple's attention and not having any more luck than he was.

She shrugged at him. "Hello!" she finally said loudly. Still nothing. "It's like they can't see us." She said.

Gertie had begun to come around mumbling that she'd seen Jeff and Hilary standing by the doors.

Scott calmed her down, and made sure she had plenty of air and a drink of water. "Let's give her some room people," he said. He turned toward the small balding man, "Mackie, Maple-- why don't you get on the air and I don't know, sing or something. We can't really keep playing old shows."

"Scotty, I'd rather we did." Mackie replied sadly, "I don't know how peppy I can be today."

"Well, then go to the storage room and find some more old recordings." He clapped the man on the shoulder, "Mapes go help him carry things would ya."

Scott turned to Betty. "See if you can go try to get a hold of Hilary's family again."

"My family?" She questioned. She felt a chill move over her spine, "Jeffrey," she blindly reached for him. He walked to her and she turned, "I think we're dead." She felt the room spin and tumbled into his arms.

When Hilary came to, she and Jeff were in the storage room. She sat on a table and he was pacing back and forth, deep in thought. "Pumpkin, why are we in here?"

He stopped and regarded her, "Darling," he walked to her, "how can I put this?" He sat next to her on the small table that had been stored, "You were right." He took her hand, "We are dead."

"This is what being dead is like?" She asked. She stood and turned sharply facing him, "I'm stuck forever in the hereafter with you?!" she waved with annoyance.

"Would you rather be stuck forever without me?" he asked softly.

She stared at him for a moment, her expression softening. "Oh Jeffrey," a small sob escaped her throat and she pulled him into a tight embrace, "what happened? How--?"

Jeff held her close, thankful that at least they had been together when it happened. He cringed when he thought of how close he'd come to leaving earlier than Hilary had that morning, but changed his mind at the last minute to wait on her. "When our taxi was run off the road this morning, Hilary, we were on the Allegheny Bridge. I overheard Scott telling Betty that he didn't think we survived the fall into the river. Either that or we drowned."

"I still had so much living to do." She whispered softly against his shoulder. She looked into his face, "You shouldn't be here, there is so much more for you to do."

"Mittens, without you I'm dead anyway." He told her tenderly, "Here is where I need to be."

She kissed him gently, then smiled against his lips. "I can still feel you."

"I think I'm gonna like this eternity." He threaded his hand through her hair and leisurely deepened the kiss, as she giggled.

Later that afternoon, they walked into the green room, and found Gertie alone, drinking a cup of coffee. She looked up and started slightly when they entered the room. Jeff noticed the color draining from her face.

"Gertie, it's ok." He rushed toward her, afraid she'd faint again, "It's just us."

"B-b-but you're--" she stammered.

"Dead, I know." Jeff finished her sentence. He and Hilary both sat at the table. "Can you see Hilary too?"

Gertie glanced her way, "Yes," she answered disdainfully.

"I don't know why you can see us." Hilary said softly, "I don't know why we're here."

"Probably all those threats you made about haunting me." Gertie answered with a slight note of sarcasm in her voice.

Hilary smiled, "Yes, probably so." She looked toward Jeff, but he was no longer there. She glanced quickly around the room, not seeing him. "Gertie, where did Jeff go?"

The older woman looked around, "I don't know. He was here a moment ago. I didn't see him leave the room."

"What's happening?" Hilary stood and frantically ran out of the green room, "Jeffrey!" She called for him as she searched every room in the studio. "This can't be happening." She whispered as she ran out the front door, only to run into the lobby. She stopped, stunned. "I can't leave."

Gertie was right behind her, "Hilary you look like you've just seen a--," she stopped realizing the redundancy of what she was about to say. "You look surprised."

"I can't leave here!" she said, "I just tried and the front door leads to the lobby, no matter how I go through it."

"Hey Gertrude." Scott came out of the studio, "who're you talking to?"

She thought for a second, "I was on the phone. We've had a lot of calls today." She glanced over Scott's shoulder at the woman who looked as if she needed something else to think about. "Hilary's fans."

"Really?" Hilary said, practically preening Gertie noted.

"All two of them." She deadpanned in Hilary's direction.

Hilary glared through lowered lids, picked a rubber band from the desk and snapped it at the woman.

Jeff suddenly walked through the front door and Hilary threw herself into his arms, "Jeffrey! Oh thank God, I thought you were gone!"

"It's okay, I'm here." He assured her.

"What happened?" She asked, "I tried to leave here and I couldn't."

"Well, apparently they just located our bodies. They found me first." He explained. "I was suddenly on the riverside, watching them pull me from the water." He brushed a tendril of hair from her eye, "When they found you, I was able to come back here. Apparently when our bodies are separated, so are we."

"Then we'll have to make sure that doesn't happen." She answered

resolutely.

She waited until Scott left Gertie alone and then walked up to the woman and asked, "Has anyone made any arrangements yet? I heard Scott say earlier that he hadn't reached my family?"

"Oh, he spoke to your mother." Gertie supplied, "She said that she and your father were making funeral arrangements there."

"There? Maine?" She looked frantically at Jeff, "I don't want to go to Maine. I need to stay here with you." She looked back at the other woman, "Gertie, can you stop them?"

"It's what your family wants, Hilary."

"To hell with what my family wants!" She argued, "This is what I want."

"I don't know what I can do." Gertie responded, "I'm not a relative or even someone who might have a say in the matter."

"Well, tell Scott that you think we might want to be buried together." Jeff suggested. "Maybe he could suggest it to Hilary's family."

"He did make that suggestion." Gertie told them.

"He did?" Hilary questioned, touched that Scott would consider their feelings.

"What did they say?" Jeff asked.

"Your mother said that since you weren't married to Jeff and that he was married to another woman it wouldn't be 'proper'." Gertie answered gesturing to Hilary.

Hilary turned and swatted Jeff's shoulder, "You HAD to marry that Czechoslovakian twit!" Her shoulders fell and she sat on one of the lobby chairs. Jeff sat next to her and took her into his arms.

"Oh Jeff, even in the afterlife she's coming between us." She said sadly.

"I refuse to let that happen, Hilary." Jeff assured her, "I'll think of something." His face lit, "Wait . . . maybe MY mother will bury me in Maine."

Gertie interrupted, "Why would she out of the blue decide to bury you in a totally different state." She added, "Your mother has already mentioned having you buried here in Pittsburgh. She said that this is where you were the happiest."

He smiled, "I'm happiest wherever Hilary is."

"Pumpkin, you are?" Hilary responded softly.

"Look, why don't the two of you make the most out of the time you have." Gertie suggested, "I'll try to find some way in the next few hours to stop Hilary from being taken to Maine."

"Thanks Gertie." Hilary said, "I won't forget it."

"Yes you will." Gertie reminded, "The minute you decide that something I do annoys you."

Hilary thought for a second, "Yes you're right, I probably will."

Gertie rolled her eyes in response. "Go," she gestured.

The afternoon rolled into evening as Jeff and Hilary wandered the studio enjoying their newfound invisibility. Several times, Gertie had interrupted them kissing. And when she'd walked into the green room to get her coat so she could leave for the night, she walked in on them making love on the green room couch.

"Maybe I do want you two separated" she groused as she left the room, her face red with embarrassment.

Hilary wandered listlessly through the station halls, bored. "I almost wish Eugenia still did the Agitato Alert." She told Jeff who followed her, "At least then we'd have something to do."

"I have an idea." Jeff said, "Didn't we donate some old clothes for the drive? I'm sure there are some good clothes in there. Maybe we can dress up and have a nice romantic evening."

Hilary smiled, "That's a good idea. I want to get out of this dress anyway."

They went into the writer's room and looked through the racks. Jeff found a good navy suit of his and Hilary found a long gown.

"I see why I gave this away." Hilary noted as the black gown had a tear in one of the seams.

"It doesn't look bad, darling." Jeff told her, "I wouldn't have noticed that tear until you brought it up."

Jeff left the writer's room and walked into studio A where the turntable was setting on Mr. Foley's table. He put on a record and turned to Hilary, but she was no longer behind him.

He hurriedly walked through the station, calling her, but getting no response. "No!" He said sadly, "not now!" He looked for several minutes for her, before giving in to the fact that she was gone.

He walked back into the studio where the slow song was just ending and sat on the table. He numbly watched the turntable finally spin itself out and still.

Hilary followed Jeff into the studio and suddenly found herself sitting in a vehicle staring at a boxed crate. She looked around quickly taking in her surroundings. "No." she whispered, realizing what was happening.

She moved to look at the crate and seeing the address realized it must contain her body. She was being flown to Ligonja. Moving to the front, she angrily told the driver she didn't want to go. But he didn't hear her. He just brushed his hand past his ear as if she were

a fly. "Oh, you'll wish I was a fly!"

The car pulled into the airport and up to the side of the plane. The crate was loaded into the cargo hold, Hilary finding herself pulled along with it. "I am NOT flying under these conditions!" She objected as if she had a choice. "I will complain to my mother as soon as I see her!"

The door was shut and soon the plane was on it's way. Hilary sat back on a crate of what looked like supplies of some sort. She stared disdainfully at the crate that held her body. "All right, Hilary you have to think of a way to get back to Pittsburgh." She chuckled a bit at the irony of the fact that she actually -wanted- to go back to Pittsburgh.

The following morning found Jeff sitting on the lobby chair staring sadly at the front door. One by one the gang walked through that door to begin their day. A part of him hoped that Hilary would breeze in under the wire as she'd always done. But he knew she wouldn't. She was in Maine.

Once everyone cleared out of the front lobby, Gertie asked, "Jeff what's the matter?"

"She's gone Gertie." He explained, "Last night she just -- disappeared."

"Oh hon, I'm so sorry." The woman said genuinely.

"I have to find a way to get her back."

"I was up half the night thinking, Jeff, and I just couldn't come up with anything." Gertie told him. "Are you sure you didn't have a will or anything stating your wishes to be buried together?"

"No." he replied a bit sharply, "Hilary refused to think about her own mortality, no matter how often I suggested it. And the will I had drawn up before I went back to London named Hilary as my benefactor. I had no one else at the time to have used should she die as well." He took an unnecessary deep breath, "It just never occurred to us."

Hilary paced the living room of the house she grew up in. Well, partially grew up in. Her mother sat in the living room wearing black and ordering a maid to retrieve some coffee.

"Grace Cavendish can act better than that!" Hilary snapped at her mother. She groaned frustratedly, "If I can't be with Jeff, I'd rather be in hell." At that moment her mother let out a ragged sigh geared at getting the sympathy of the visitors she was hosting.

Hilary sat hard on the easy chair opposite her mother, "No, I AM in hell."

She eyed a vase sitting on the table next to the chair she occupied. It was a glass monstrosity that she remembered hating even as a child. With a determined smile, Hilary casually knocked the vase off the table. She giggled as it shattered on impact frightening everyone in the room. "Ahh, that felt good," she said as she stood and left

the room to see what other mischief she could get into. If they wanted to ruin her afterlife, well then, they were going to pay for it.

Gertie hung the phone up and turned to look at Jeff, who had not moved from his seat the entire day. Frankly she was getting tired of watching him mope. She had come upon one last option, but didn't want to tell Jeff in case it didn't work.

She walked into the business office and asked if she could speak with Scott alone.

"Sure Gertie, what's on your mind?" he asked as she entered the office, closing the door behind her.

"Well, Mr. Sherwood, it's a long story and I hope you don't think I am crazy by the end of it." She began as she sat in the chair opposite his desk.

"Try me." He replied.

"Well, it's about Jeff and Hilary."

He interrupted mistaking her meaning, "I sent flowers to the funeral home today, Gertie. And we are all going tomorrow for Jeff's funeral. I've already arranged for a memorial service for Hilary so that we can say goodbye to her that way."

"That's a good idea, Scott, but that's not what I was talking about." Gertie added, once Scott had finished his sentence. "Scott, do you believe in ghosts?"

"Uh, hadn't really thought about it, why?" Scott asked confused.

"Because I have one really depressed ghost sitting in my lobby and he hasn't moved since Hilary disappeared last night."

"Say that again." Scott asked, unsure he knew exactly what the woman was talking about.

"Scott, Yesterday in the green room, I really did see them. I don't know why -I- can see them, probably Hilary's idea of a joke, but I can see them." She explained, "Scott, they need to be buried together if they want to stay together. And believe me, they want to stay together."

"Are you telling me that Jeff and Hilary are here, now?"

"Just Jeff is now. Since Hilary's body was flown to Maine last night, he's been sitting in the lobby, lifeless." She said, "Well, even more lifeless."

"I can't believe I am saying this, you're telling me you want me to figure out a way to get Hilary back here." Scott realized.

"Yes. I was awake all night trying to think of a way." Gertie explained. "I didn't know she was gone until this morning. Jeff told me she left last night."

"There was no will or document stating their wishes?" Scott asked.

"No."

A slow smile spread across Scott's face. "Gertiegertiegertie. You can see Jeff right?"

"Yes." She answered, unsure where he was going.

"Can you trade solid objects between you? Like a pen for example."

"I don't know." She answered then recalled, "yes, I think so. Hilary hit me with a rubber-band yesterday."

Scott smiled wider, "Go get Jeff would you. I think I may have an answer." He leaned forward and picked up his phone.

Moments later, Scott explained to Jeff what he had planned. It took a bit of getting used to speaking to an empty chair and having Gertie translate. If Jeff hadn't been a friend of his, Scott may have started to doubt Gertie's sanity.

"Jeff wants to know how you are going to get Doug to agree to this." She interpreted.

"Piece of cake." Scott replied, "I'll agree to let him take Betty out for dinner and a movie. That is, if she agrees."

While they were waiting for Doug, Scott set a pen and paper in front of Jeff and asked him to try to sign it, so they knew it could be done. Scott had to shake his head slightly when he saw the pen rise and Jeff's signature appear on the paper.

"Okay, we know that can be done." He said once Jeff finished, "Now to get Doug to agree to it."

Doug appeared in the doorway of Scott's office. "Hello Doug, come on in. I have a favor I need to ask of you." Scott said as he gestured for the man to enter the room. Gertie closed the door behind him.

"Doug, what I'm getting ready to ask you to do will make no sense. But believe me, it's important and needs to be taken care of by one p.m. tomorrow." Scott explained and had the man sit.

Scott started to say something when Doug sat in the chair that he'd last spoken to Jeff from. Gertie shook her head and gestured next to her. He took that to mean that Jeff had moved to stand beside her.

"All right Scott, what is this big favor?"

"I need for you to witness the signing of a document and co-sign it."

"Okay, what's so secretive about that?"

"Scott smiled nervously, "I need for you to back date it a little

over a year."

Doug stood, "Scott, you know I can't do that. It's illegal."

"I didn't say you had to file it." Scott explained, "I just need you to make it look legal and binding in case another lawyer would happen to want to examine it."

Doug sat again, "What is this concerning, Scott."

"Jeff and Hilary's wishes to be buried together." Scott explained, "See there was never any document signed that stated those wishes, but Jeff here says that that is what they want."

Doug looked around the room, and then eyed Scott as if he'd gone crazy.

"Look, Jeff is willing to sign papers stating those wishes if you'd draw them up. We can just say they were found in a pile of official paperwork when his mother was going through their house."

"Scott--Jeff is dead." Doug reminded.

Wanting to move the process along, Jeff grabbed the pen and wrote on the back of the paper he'd just signed. "Doug, please. I'll sign anything, just get Hilary back here before they bury her in Maine tomorrow at 1 and it's too late." He shoved the paper at Doug who read it and then calmly asked if he could have a drink of water. "You people are going to drive me insane yet." Doug mumbled when Gertie handed him a cup.

"All right." Doug finally agreed, still not quite believing it, and left with the promise he'd be back within the hour with the papers for Jeff to sign.

Hilary paced the house eavesdropping on conversations between her family. Her funeral was set at one o'clock that afternoon, so most of the conversations centered around her. She sat on the kitchen table between her mother and Aunt Myrna listening to them talk about her and Jeff.

"He was much too young for her anyway." Her mother said.

"Well, I do think it was a shame that he had to break her heart like that." Myrna replied.

"Yes, I agree." Hilary interjected. Her Aunt Myrna had always been a favorite relative. She could always count on her for a kind word.

"Though, I do think she could have done better than a man who could barely support her." Myrna added.

Hilary opened her mouth, shocked. "Well, excuse me for falling in love. I doubt either of you would know what that is like." She hopped off the table and wandered to the bay window in the back of the kitchen.

"Jeffrey, what are you doing now?" she whispered softly.

The telephone rang and she heard the housemaid answer it.

"It's for you, Mrs. Booth. Someone named Doug Thompson." The petite Georgia said and handed her the phone.

Hilary's ears perked when she heard Doug's name. Could that mean they found a way to-- no she didn't want to get her hopes up. She walked closer to her mother so she could hear the conversation.

"But we have the funeral all set for this afternoon, we can't just cancel it." Mrs. Booth argued when she was told the news.

Hilary breathed a sigh of relief, "Oh thank you, whoever is responsible."

"Where was this document found?" The woman asked.

Hilary could hear Doug saying that it was found in a safety deposit box that Jeff had kept. He explained that it was quite legal, he'd looked it over himself. It had been signed just a few weeks after they had remarried in Mexico.

Hilary laughed, "Scott Sherwood, I owe you one!" She knew this could only have been one of his ideas.

"Let me let you speak to Hilary's father." Mrs. Booth turned to Myrna, "Would you run and get him for me?"

Hilary's father spoke to Doug and agreed to send her body back to Pittsburgh, but he did want to see a copy of the will in question. Hilary breathed a sigh of relief and hugged her father. "Oh, thank you Daddy, you have no idea what this means to me!"

"I just hope you are happy, child." Her father said.

Hilary turned, "What?" but realized he was looking at a picture of her he kept in his wallet.

She'd been so angry and hurt at being torn from Jeff's side, she hadn't realized that her family too was hurting. She approached her father. "I am daddy. I've never been happier in my, well, I've never been happier." She hugged the man tightly, hoping he could feel her, "I'll miss you. You are the only person in this family that ever understood me."

"I'll miss you too, little Hilly." He said quietly as he hugged a picture of a five year old auburn haired child that he truly wished he'd spent more time with.

Jeff looked at the clock on the wall. She should be back anytime now. He was glad it was late and everyone had left for the evening. His funeral had been that afternoon and it hadn't been easy to not be able to comfort his mother. Scott promised he'd give her a note that Jeff had written and to tell her he'd found it when he was clearing out some of Jeff's things at the station.

He was pacing the hallway when he heard the voice behind him say his name softly. "Jeffrey."

He turned, "Hilary!" He rushed to her and swept her into his arms, "I was so afraid you were lost to me forever."

She embraced him tightly, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry, "Oh my darling thank you for getting me out of that house."

He laughed and hugged her closer, kissing her eagerly. He loosened his hold and stepped back, "You owe me a dance."

She extended her arm so he could take her hand and followed as he led her into the studio. She was surprised to see candlelight sparkling from several directions in the room. "Pumpkin, did you do all this?"

"Scott bought the candles for me," he told her, "I found that we can move and touch solid objects."

"Yes, I know." Hilary smiled, "My mother used to have a very ugly vase." She gave him her most innocent look, "It was an accident, really."

He laughed and started the record that he'd played the night she vanished. "The Very Thought Of You" began to play and she moved effortlessly into his arms as they danced long into the morning.

The End . . . or is it. (You know me ;-)

End
file.